

**Indian Paradigms of Development  
Man Standard and Communication**

**Biplab Loho Choudhury**



*“This book puts forward the paradigm of ‘ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress’ (ESTGP) as an advancement of the paradigm of ‘sustainable development’ shifting the aim of stability and growth from development at any given time and from one condition to better (which is decided from debatable frames of reference and ideal types) to that of continuity with urge of natural being and becoming of individuals and societies.”*

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## **Preface**

This is an effort to present the logic and need of considering man as the main focus of development. How man negotiates with nature and self with the vision of re-establishing the regime of sustainable being and becoming that extends through generations is reflected upon in this monograph. The concept of Man standard to delegate to money its overdue place as an instrument in the hand of man is presented in the light of SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra's observations as the reference point of the discussion. The emergence of information as the most important own contribution that man could ever think in his own effort of developing with sustainability is presented. Communication, the most underutilized of resources bestowed on man by nature is argued to take its due position in the frame of progress.

With hope of contributing an iota into Ecologically Sustainable Trans-Generational Progress and sharing the same.

Biplab LohoChoudhury

Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan



## Chapter I

### Introduction

Let me begin quoting from Henri Bartoli's book titled *Rethinking Development: Putting an End to Poverty*. Bartoli observed (1999)<sup>1</sup>:

*It is neither doctrine, ideology nor "world view" in the Schumpeterian sense that should dictate the interpretation of development. It is with reference to the actual sense of the world, with a view to seizing and transforming it through the creative skills of men and women, that the "new paradigm" must be considered, and economics consigned to its role as an instrument in the service of all aspects of life, with human objectives.*

*Development is not merely growth. It assumes a human dimension when it encompasses the enhancement of material well-being in low-income countries, be it food, health, education or the duration and dignity of life; in other words, components not inherent in development. It also assumes a human dimension when, through vigorous human activity, it seeks to establish for men and women the world over the conditions essential to the maintenance and blossoming of life. It is pluridimensional when it is a "project" (Francois Perroux), "an historical progression" (Ignacy Sachs); far*

*from being restricted to countries which “diplomacy by terminology” (Gunnar Myrdal) defines as “backward”, “least developed”, “underdeveloped” or “developing”, it affects all peoples and all nations.*

Few aspects from the quote need great attention by default of the economic and development situation prevailing worldwide.

1. The dominance of economic doctrine in development, for the betterment of the world, needs to be disbanded and economics should not be conferred a status higher than that of an instrument in the service of human life. Question immediately peeps in. Do we need a substitute doctrine, ideology or “world view” to guide us then in the quest of development or don’t the world need to be governed by single such view?
2. What is the actual sense of the world? Isn’t this sense built in societies through generations? Is this same across the world? How to transform this through the creative skill of men and women? Do we require a “paradigm” or example to be applied to countries and communities for this transformation? What would be the nature of such transformation?
3. Is it possible to provide human dimension to development for maintenance and blossoming of

life of all everywhere in the world with the existing set of endearing values in economics and development? A positive 'no' in reply throws the next question-then how?

This monograph is developed in search of replies to these questions drawing heavily on thoughts and practices propounded by SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra (1888-1969 AD) and the growing human-nature-culture-computer interface. Duality in civilizational continuity and break over last nine thousand years is taken as the backdrop for exploring the essentials of the concept "ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress" (henceforth ESTGP) which this monograph aims to present.

One may think that ESTGP is equivalent to sustainable development (SD). The United Nation's (henceforth UN) Brundtland Report (1987) defined SD as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) stated that "cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature"; it becomes "one of the roots of development understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence".

UN 2005 World Summit Outcome Document identified economic development, social development, and environmental protection as the "interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of SD.

ESTGP goes further taking away the load from the concept of development that one has to be undeveloped or underdeveloped to qualify for development. ESTGP is the demand of the time as the filthy rich (or the highly developed) is the worst beggar who has vilify the virtue of begging and the filthy rich is the worst thief in the daylight. This man is not the really developed because he/she advances and gets joy by usurping others in umpteen ways, and then his/her return to the others has also conditions and profit plan. He/she is worried and anxious of losing hold, a psychic.

It is rather important that we accept safe existence of every being and his/her action of becoming as individual's progress. The word progress presupposes continuity and that is the reality of human existence at individual, family, community and country levels. So, from every individual to every country, the right to progress is natural.

Amartya Sen's work also raises this point, albeit in a different way. His stance "enjoins us to review our perception of human behavior on the premise not of an *a priori* approximation, but of empirical observation,

and to focus our attention on ‘capacities’, ‘expressions of individuals’ genuine freedom to achieve certain aims”(1993).<sup>2</sup> Every country’s plan should be a plan for integrating action-initiatives into the continuity of greater existence of its people. Such action-initiatives need to correct aberrations to existence while keeping up the beauty of the tradition-trail.

A look into continuity records of civilizations for thousands of years offers two insights. Breaks came in civilizations as and when violence engulfed human mind. The violence to nature destroyed the Indus civilization. Bharat i.e. India learnt lesson out of it and retained its dominantly rural character for last five thousand years.

The violence towards indigenous people destroyed the bardic culture of Greece and created the city-prominent Greek civilization. The continuity was lost. The Greek civilization could not sustain. Look at New World of United States of America, created by decimation of the indigenous Red Indians a few centuries back. It seems, as if there is hurry to reach the top and stay there by hook or by crook. The stabilization of progress is yet to come because it needs a more satisfactory moral and spiritual existence.

ESTGP brings the concept of progress as the nature-human-culture interface with continuity and becoming

of human being at the centre stage. It offers the scope of creative planning for developing societies from within with stabilization of good result through generations. So, development becomes only one aspect of progress. Thus ESTGP is a clear departure from SD.

Expansion of globalized market based capitalism as the dominant driver of economy and development despite recognition of limitations of this neo-liberal system calls for concept and course correction in search of ecologically sustainable trans-generational human development. UNESCO's International day reflection (30<sup>th</sup> November 1998) in Paris on the topic "Rethinking Development: do we need a paradigm shift" stressed to "seek innovation and practical solutions that would provide an escape from the crisis and create conditions conducive to the establishment of a balanced international economic system and sustainable development, reconciling the exigencies of economic growth, social equity, the strengthening of democracy, and environmental protection"<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the call more than a decade back, economists and planners are too much engrossed with financial aspects of economy and development, taking granted the form and substance of the economy worldwide as sacrifice in the altar of profit by the few, and apparent sobering the effect of the profiting on common man. On



the other hand, malfunctioning human mind is threatening to topple, whatever good effect the enterprising zeal has, by succumbing to deviance from working for society and country's benefit to own limitless selfish ends. Specialist economic and developmental prescriptions are failing conspicuously in transforming development from *for a few to for all* and from *a lifetime to trans-generation* which obviously should be ecologically sustainable. Therefore it's appropriate to consider common-sense economic practices and precepts representing virtues of old economic senses and appreciation of the contemporary problems.

In this context, economic principles and practices suggested by SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra (henceforth SreeSree) demand attention. "SreeSree was not an economist in the sense Adam Smith and Amartya Sen are understood. He never studied history of economic thoughts from primitive economy to modern global economy..... SreeSree has always regarded Man as the greatest wealth and asset of man instead of money, where as economics is regarded as the study of wealth. According to SreeSree it is man who is the creator of wealth. So, all possible care should be taken to improve the quality of man so that he can generate wealth to fulfil the wants of mankind." (2002) <sup>4</sup>

SreeSree, whose man-making movement has been gaining ground surpassing his years of personal and social action (1915 to 1969) in South Asia, analysed contemporary and future scenario of development quite unconventionally. His common-sense individual economic practices and connecting individual to social enterprises and development from an out-of-box approach offer an insight for solving the crisis.

Human-nature-culture-computer interface is gradually getting realized due to advancement of science and technology. New media is now instrumental in transforming the production process and cultural milieu in many ways. Again there is a probability that profit motive and power mongering won't be able to control the expressiveness, collaboration and freedom of choice of the people. The magnitude of advancement of science and technology has reached the stage where its contribution can't remain quantitative i.e. more to be utilized by only those having investment capital. It is gradually transforming itself into qualitative contributor role in shaping the future of the world in new media avatar. So far the man has continued exploiting everything of the nature. Now the human can contribute too.

From civilization to civilization, the approach of such exploitation of five elements namely land, water,

energy, air and sky varied with the dominant strain of thoughts influencing the powerful. During last four centuries, increased domination of the West on resources in Asia, Africa, South America and Australasia along with spread of profit and greed motivated exclusionist economic systems universalized excessive exploitation of five elements. It brought the concept of economic man to the fore. However in the qualitative transformation in science and technology, for the first time, the man is able to contribute an element of his own to the list of elements. Information is old as a reality but utilizing it as a resource intelligently can go a long way bringing down the exploitation of other five elements. ESTGP considers this aspect as an integral component to ensure bringing down expenses on development and utilizing communication as soft power in the hand of the folk.

## **Chapter II**

### **Dominant Economic Ideologies & SreeSree**

The ideologies: Two main economic ideologies have so far guided political economy worldwide. The communist ideology and the capitalist ideology- both are based on some common observations of human nature. The basic premise of both is who owns the means of production has the power.

Capitalism stresses the aspiration in man to grow by enterprising zeal with motive of getting surplus, enjoying accumulation and utilization of wealth as consumer. It promotes individual right and the state duty to create congenial situation for pursuing the right. It encourages private property. Democracy, as a really expensive form of elective governance requires financial strength of those who want the political power. So, wealthy persons have much greater prospect in democracy to manage its functioning to their benefit. Therefore the politico-capitalist nexus is the reality.

Communism opposes such a proposition. It wants power of politics and economics in the hand of the working class. It wants to destroy the capitalist class and its associates. It wants to see the state as the repository of all the capital, and the decider of who gets what and how in an equitable manner. Private accumulation is

anathema to the operation of such an economic ideology.

Neo-liberal ideology, the latest economic ideology emanating from liberal capitalist thought, tries sort of a compromise between the interest of common man and the industrial capitalists. It posits the state in dual role. The state has to facilitate the environment beneficial for growth of private capital and wealth. It has to take up welfare measures for common people to ensure they don't die due to hunger, ill health and absence of basic needs for living. It has to ensure that capitalist gets advantage of natural resources for industry building. It becomes a negotiator between common man who needs to be destabilized for the purpose of industrialization. But it takes industrialization as a higher-must than agriculture or protection of people and nature. So the state becomes a player of communication strategy to divide the common man with the sop of immediate and individual benefits.

Bartoli calls for disbanding the dominance of these economic doctrines in development, for the betterment of the world. Economics should not be conferred a status higher than that of an instrument in the service of human life, he emphasizes. A close look into operation of these three ideologies hints at one common strand. None of these could resolve the enemy

syndrome i.e. if one espouses someone's cause, he should identify someone else as the enemy. So capitalist is enemy of common man who are majority, common man abhors the capitalist, and capitalist considers common man as trifle who can be purchased with money and played to his/her tune. The leadership of state declares the people questioning the logic of rude industrial expansion as anti-state while the other side calls leaders anti-people. If economic, political and social leaders are full of such approaches, their policies would pit man against man and man against nature, the greatest contributor to our trans-generational existence. If this enemy syndrome continues, no ism would be good enough to leave this world habitable and enjoyable for future generations.

Main Strands of SreeSree's concept: He offered an altogether different plane for thought and action to resolve this enemy syndrome on the basis of His own style of practical and theorizing from 1915 to 1969. He declared "I understand that every single individual is a living universe. To the extent that a single person is ignored and neglected, just so much, any plan, movement or institution betrays existence."<sup>5</sup> He identified that to develop and sustain development of a society and the country, its human potential needs to be unfurled through proper family, parental, social and national practices. Such practices must be rooted in the

country's own *samskaras* (reforms) stabilized over hundreds of generations and gradually incorporating other good aspects from all over the world on that solid foundation.

The basis of such progress depends not only upon good health of the mother, but also on a marriage of respect between two holistically learned woman and man from equi-cultural cluster of families followed by their craving to serve the country through honest practices and nurturing better next-generations. Money as the main basis of marriage is anathema to the cause. Proper family, parental, social and national practices are only possible when there is intelligence in human being, driven by emotion to serve four levels of progress in inter-interested and inter-connected ways.

This inter-connectedness and inter-interestedness is possible by adhering to the ideal in life through action that connects all these four levels in the universal thread of being and becoming. Once any person practices this adherence, his/her emotional intelligence overcomes all disconnects between individual, family, social and national goals in the service of humanity. So the policies, programs and practices emanate in the person and the group in the larger interest and with much far-sight about probable impact of such actions. He/she does not feel insecure, instinct-driven and

despondent in individual and family life, which are often the causes of corrupt mind and corrupt social and public-sphere practices.

Corrupt mind is diseased with pauperism. To be poor is not a sin but to be pauper is because a poor can improve with effort but a pauper is mentally ill. A pauper has a larking fear to face ordeals of life with calm and braveness. How far educated and well-to-do the person may be, he/she hoards wealth by exploiting and thieving on others. But a country prospers with dignity when it has human beings having connectedness to others and the practice to serve others selflessly as their own. So, whether a country is really developed should be indicated by the proportion of people who serve others willingly. More the people are self-employed in the true sense, better the sprouting of human potential because self-employment needs serving attitude and innovativeness to attract preference of customers. Self-employment, in higher level of growth, transforms into great enterprises sustainable through generations.

Industry and agriculture, for balanced growth should improve side by side without much harm to the land, water, air, forest and society. Industry is which grows from within utilizing resources and agriculture is the culture of good produces which nourishes being by



promoting health. *Sadachar* or practices of physical and mental hygiene is the stabilizer of the good health through generations. Security of the society and country is a must for the peaceful condition. Education is to edit experience with progressive push to the population and thus a continuous process from within supporting improvement of the society and the country. It's not only institutional but family-based and continuous in nature positing individual and family in the social, national and global frame. Therefore every planning should have an integrated approach to agriculture, industry, health and hygiene, security and education in a mutually fulfilling operational perspective.

Any economic and development activity in all four levels should be judged for efficiency by employing two quantitative indicators and one attribute. Resource mobilization or earning something should be judged on the criterion of acquisition expertise. Workmanship or implementation should be cost-efficient in terms of cost-saving and cost versus benefit accrual. Completion or closure of any work or program should be decent in terms of presentation of benefits and change in satisfaction level of the individual and the social group. SreeSree said, "adept in earning, profitable in work, beautiful accomplishment-observing these you can assess how much a person is efficient".<sup>6</sup> Such an

efficiency audit determines the serving mentality of the men executing any work or program.

Serving mentality arises from the sense of belongingness and love to the people of the country. He rhymed on this aspect—"money is not your own but man, catch hold of man as many as you can". Such a standard in all activities rather than the economic standard ensures that one feels people as own and to be served in all earnestness. This posits money as an instrument of exchange, not of domination in terms of possession. Practicing such a position in life demands enjoying the role of a giver, not of a beggar with a begging bowl. From individual to the government, every level in the country should make it the credo to offer to the respected and the needy.

The development, to be trans-generationally sustainable, must evolve from within the society so that development inputs won't create break in the civilizational continuity of the country. It's better not to rely on anything that strikes at traditional traits --those nodules of accumulated experience on which family and country evolve. The root of tradition lies deep in the bosom of the nature that comes from the cross-conflict for life and growth. SreeSree Thakur commented, "But beware: to advocate the new without an understanding explanation of the profound that is embedded in the

old only opens the doorway to decadence and disintegration and brings demoralization that makes sufferings swell in a foaming fury”.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of tradition in the scheme of development can only be ignored to the peril of the society. SreeSree Thakur said, “I believe it is tradition alone that links the past with the present and gradually moulds by jerks the structure of individuals, families and communities with an intelligent, intuitive farsightedness toward a distinctive development and with a necessary resistance to anti-becoming. Further, one who lacks or loses this instinctive trait coming down from primitive fatherhood into the present, finds his inquisitive, conscientious aptitudes gradually diminishing. This in turn makes one a personality of whimsical, mechanical thoughts and superficial understanding.”<sup>8</sup>

Following Neo-liberalism: The case of India with reference to following neo-liberal practices by the state machinery deserves attention as an illustration .The economic growth of India following policies of neo-liberalism (to a great extent) is laudable. But its effect for the common man is far below the projected outcome. It does not augur well for the country that every evaluation of economic programs for improvement of condition of countrymen is critical of achievements. In the transparency indexing of public

works, the country is in a lowly position due to corrupt practices in its public service. Not a single sector of such service –be it education, law and order, health and hygiene, sanitation, communications, security, poverty eradication or public distribution service, is away from the menace of great corruption.

Corruption is now characterized by being systemic, imputed and high-level. The impact of this is gradually getting widespread at the grass root due to the modus operandi of various schemes. A mix of low-end corruption (like low-income countries) and high-end corruption thus corrode any good effect of development. No finger-pointing to individual believers and practitioners of corruption at high places would correct the deviance. It is important to think and act to stop this outrage that is gradually devastating the moral fabric nurtured by the Bharatiya Samaj (Indian Society) over five thousand years.

This is further important because the Western model of democracy and education that free India adopted along with the old concept of Panchayat, and spread to the hinterlands of the country develops leadership and bureaucracy from below, who are getting trained in public life through handling the percentage-regime schemes. It would no further be pricking conscience that one is not giving full value of the money spent for

public service, and devouring much of the same by himself or herself. This mass-scale blurring of line between corruption and honest public transaction has become an almost hereditary disease. If an economic practice leads to gradual loss of character of a nation, what do we do with it? Already we have several banana provinces with ugly and disproportionate show of luxury and comfort by few. The rot needs to be eliminated from the root.

As if our grand development plans are the sieves of money-drain by the implementers in the name of serving the people. We are clearly suffering from Dog's Tail Syndrome<sup>9</sup>, a condition in which so much may be the effort, once the force (here the money and the key-implementers from outside the community) is withdrawn, entire effect almost vanishes. So after six decades of planned development efforts, India needs uncorrupt minds and hands to lead the development from concept, strategy to execution to improve our standing in Human Development Index.

Administrative, fiscal, financial and production policies in an economy must flow from the enlightened self-interest of man. Whenever actions of a person, a group or a government deviate from this, distortions creep into the social organization. The consumption pattern which is dictated by unrulid necessity and unchaste life,

and the production process which “sears the being” of the people engaged in it, cannot lay foundation of a healthy economic system. Attempts to earn money without a commitment, through the use of heartless intelligence, is an outrage. (1987)<sup>10</sup>

Evaluation studies across India had been showing failure with development again and again when we used different western models in different ways. Studies also had been hinting at villagers getting relegated to the status of mere recipients and dole seekers, and a neo-rich population with corrupt record vitiating development environment. Own participatory resources of villagers were neglected over decades, pushing them down to a mental state of non-worthiness and pauperism. Gradually corruption had been forcing them to believe that nothing happens with honesty and they were sub-human. (2009)<sup>11</sup>

Globalization and liberalization, while integrating Indian economy to the dominant ideological camp of the world economy have been posing a great challenge to the policy makers in India to bridge the gap between the well-to-do and the poor. While consumerism and individualism have started moulding the mindset of many, the poor are gradually sinking further down into squalor due to corruption, nepotism, and

embezzlement of development fund by the so called rich in different roles. (2002)<sup>12</sup>

How the gap would be narrowed down when the fund for uplift of the poor is increasingly being grabbed by the educated Indians who constitute the country's leadership in politics, administration, development and industry? To run a country's economy in its commercial, administrative, security and development aspects requires not only plan and programs or giving it a human face. It requires the really educated people as leaders and executives, whose patriotism and *swahridayta* with community would stop them from embezzling any iota of the fund, and prompt to respect people's own knowledge and practices. Unfortunately our essentially Macaulayesque educational policies and look West economic policies have gelled together well over last six decades to create this crisis.

Still many are thinking that as our economy would go ahead further in capitalist mode, it would create opportunity for all. Jean Sismondi, an economist closely observing industrial revolution in England more than 200 years back rightly condemned this notion. He observed that when more money was available to business, jobs ended up being lost as the companies replaced their workers with machines. This ran against the traditional stance in conventional economics that

said increased income would increase wages and job numbers.<sup>13</sup>

A close look at evolution of industrial West also reveals the fallacy of the thinking. The basic principles of economics of liberalism such as private property rights, individual sovereignty, self-interest, rationality, and self-regulating market are retorted as the foundation of industrial West. Though 18<sup>th</sup> century economist Adam Smith is hailed as the perspective builder for the industrial revolution, most powerful western states actually developed to a great extent by usurping others' resources during the era of colonization and thrusting a product dependency on them at unethical quest for profit.

As geo-political scenario went a sea-change by the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, industrial West went for creating a psychological dependency by luring so-called elite of de-colonized countries. Such elite, new to power were also in search of readymade solutions to develop their countries very fast. As most of them had educational stint in the best of the universities of the colonizer countries, were mesmerized by the show of superficial grandeur of the West. Even in a country like India, this elite was in great belief that for rapid development, our own approach won't do. They believed development as material gains (*artha*) isolated



from Dharma (ethical way of being and becoming of all individuals). So Gandhi's economic concept and Tagore's rural reconstruction approach were only to be discarded by the leaders. As a result, the dominant paradigm ruled the mind of political, industrial, intellectual and bureaucratic elite.

Mahatma Gandhi and the author of *Small is Beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher tried, and Herman Daly is trying to move economic thought away from the dehumanized, mathematical, and more and more social or humanistic economists are placing human - and more recently environmental - welfare at the centre of their discipline.<sup>14</sup>

With gradually increasing importance of information as the sixth resource (started in 1980s and gaining currency from 1990s with fast-paced new media development) for economy and development (in addition to land and mineral, water, air, energy, and sky), the first-world countries changed the tactics of keeping their economy ahead. They institutionalized the mechanism of pressing for liberalizing other country's rules, and globalizing in the form of World Trade Organization to open others' markets and production more and more. It implies that despite industrialization and its consequent urban consumerist aspirations causing havoc to the ecosystem, the same basic

principles of economics of liberalism are to guide the next development which is supposed to save the world from the havoc to nature and trans-generational human existence.

Needless to say, economics as the hand maiden of man that deals with the production of produces and goods, the wealth creation, human resource utilization, trade and exchange of material objects and so on has been important in every civilization. The ill-effect of unbridled capitalist expansion and the increasing corrupt economic practices raise question of how far the economics of liberalism would do good for the countries at large?

The world is now in search of better alternatives for changes in planning for development. However, development planning can't differ from the basic premise of economic principles followed by the country. Therefore, at this juncture, we are in search of own alternative from within in economy and development. It is also important to trace why people with education and responsibility to serve the political economy for improvement of people's condition are highly amenable to corrupt practices. Acceptance of greed and corruption of people as a *fait accompli* in the process of economic governance and development demonstrates

increasing moral bankruptcy of contemporary social, economic and political thinking.

More such assumptions seep into planning, higher allocations of resources for gradually decreasing development benefit to the people would be rationalized. Already in many sectors and many provinces, welfare and development administration is reaching such a condition that allocation for real development work is difficult to be obtained. Salary payment and debt repayment with or without interest are the two concerns there. Rational, administrative and psychological solutions to these interrelated menaces need to be part of any development plan prescription.

Do we really need to beat the industrial West on their terms? Western countries also need a fresh approach to progress. It is clear from the studies of state social security and welfare programs in most of the western countries that in long term such programs create a growing population of idle, compulsive men and women. The West has very high cost of health services because such services are mostly offered by private enterprises for profit. So the government has to support common man with such welfare measures. It clearly shows that the state intervention with neo-liberal policy prescriptions accepts two fates together.

First it accepts that the private enterprising should always take the toll in terms of nature and common man's woes and it is government's duty to allow it as such. Second, the state would create the problem of gradually creating generations of increasing number of idle and compulsive people by offering welfare sops as act of penance for allowing growth of enterprises at expense of others within the country. This type of neo-liberal solution, if followed by the countries with very old civilizational continuity would gradually weaken the population. Not only this, the West also needs to come out from this vicious cycle.

The opposite ideology in the present shape is definitely not the prescription as it has a deeply ingrained enemy syndrome persisting and with such imagined enemies, an ism can only prescribe fighting with fellow human beings alone or cornering one group in the name of promoting other groups. The prescription lies in accepting one simple sentence- *we would grow together without excluding anyone and our natural ally, the nature*. This is profoundly spiritual a statement because it demands us having a great acceptance level and serving attitude.

Let us develop our own approach to economy and development which would guide our policies and plans and enable us to have ecologically sustainable trans-

generational progress. Can't we reflect upon our own approaches and methods to ensure that economic development is subservient and serving the cause of existence and growth of the civilizational people is all-inclusive? It requires a shift in thinking from reductionist approach to the integrative approach. India needs to develop such a grand theory of economics and progress which has place for every country's needs and cultural-conditioning along with course correction so that greed, avarice and blasphemous aggrandizement does not create any more civilizational break in any part of the world.

Such a task might not be dared by many others. However our empirical experiences over thousands of years, and the action of many seers and sages (for whom the practice of Dharma is the reply of being and becoming of every human being for realizing the potential we are endowed with) during last century qualifies us as a people for the task. Can we script the replacement to a system whose driving force is greed and profit mongering? Can we effect a bloodless revolution which ensures that at every depression, capitalists are not to be saved by money from people's exchequers so that the exploitation continues in the interest of the few? Can we alter the situation where wars are fought for economic domination and in the course devastate property and lives of common man?

Let us look at India's ancient civilizational values—wars were fought but seldom common people's property and occupational practices were disturbed, seldom people were barred from travelling to a place of interest in other kingdom for the reason of a war. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya during 4<sup>th</sup> century before Christ described "...For, as has been reported in earlier Vedas, smritis and epics, the men themselves, with their wives and children, lived in the country, and entirely avoided going to the town."<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere from Megasthenes' Indica the tradition of India becomes clear. He wrote regarding the villagers, "A bulk of these persons never went to the town either to take part in tumults or for any other purpose."<sup>16</sup> It shows that the village had everything for aspirations of the ruralites. Sinha mentions an interesting fact about villagers "To protect these people from all troubles and ravages due to war was the most sacred duty of the state as well as the most accepted principle in all inter-state relations in ancient India, for men of this class were regarded as public benefactors."<sup>17</sup>

It may seem to be too ambitious. But why not we discuss, tell and give the ancient reality as the new dream to the world? Gandhi made use of our civilisational practices in his concept and experiment of Gram-Swaraj. His model of development could not get

favour of leaders of free India. Tagore's Sriniketan Experiment on holistic rural development was a good demonstration of what villagers' could do to improve their lot if they get an inspiring mentor. During the same period, SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra, through his 'Labour for Love' movement (1917)<sup>18</sup> and by creating the principle of Swastayani and Istavrity turned lakhs of persons into practitioners of an individual economy which made them ideal-centred servants of the society. Now around five crore practitioners are into it. We find the same 'labour for love' translated into reality in slums of Maharashtra by Sant Gadge Baba.

Gopinath Bardoloi, Prime Minister of Assam (prior to independence of India this was the designation of chief minister of the state) described the Hemaitpur program of SreeSree as the finest example of rural reconstruction in India.<sup>19</sup> SreeSree's discourses spread over half a century (1915 to 1969), both with his disciples and visitors from the country and abroad, dealt with definitions, methods, process, practice and perspectives in economy and development of the human progeny. Much of the ills of economy and development that we face as human beings and citizens for last six decades were foreseen by him.

His emphatic stress on putting Man in his/her entirety of faculty and possibility in connectedness with the

nature at the centre stage of all economic policies and development, and His following the same stress in organization building and 'Man making Movement' from 1917 hints at crystallizing the concept of Man as standard in economics and development. The movement has become trans-generational with his family of children by birth and children by culture through last three generations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, United Kingdom and United States of America practicing the ideal-centric individual economic practices of giving and sharing with neighbors and nature as own.



## **Chapter III**

### **Man Standard: Quest for Humanising Economics**

Individual rationality promotes overall social welfare is an old refrain. The refrain is often proved inadequate while applying individual rationality for social welfare. This refrain has been questioned in economic theory too. It's a common sense improbability that people always think and act on the basis of economic rationality, in pursuance of their pure materialistic interest. Rationality claims to utilize intelligence almost objectively. However, fair economic practices, becoming a rarity hints at emotion working against the interest of the society. The mismatch between individual and collective rationality and the non-economic (and therefore "irrational") decisions taken by all or a section of the society often threatens stability and growth of any society.

SreeSree found the dichotomy between individual and collective rationality, and between economic and non-economic interests untenable. Human being must fashion his/her work that helps the process of his/her being and becoming. However for the smooth functioning of the social system, his/her desires and aspirations need to be sublimated. Amitava Kundu observed (1987):<sup>20</sup>

*Once this occurs, self-interest cannot be seen as divorced from community interest. And if the individuals act within this framework, using the “man standard” as opposed to the “money standard”, the apparent contradictions created by the decisions based on fragmented self-interests and short-term private gains would tend to disappear.*

*The combination of economic and non-economic welfare provides the base for an integrated philosophy of life, which must coordinate the thought, speech and action of a person. This would make possible harmonization of discrepancies between personal goals and collective goals, and create a social structure permitting enlightened self-fulfillment and promoting, at the same time, growth and stability in the economy.*

*Thakur<sup>21</sup> believed that the creation of this social structure and its functioning can be facilitated through the use of money. However, the latter must, in no case, be allowed to determine the basic orientation of the structure or its priorities. The enlightened self-interest of man has to be kept in the centre of this structure because, as Thakur noted, ultimately, “people are your own”- while money belongs to the “others” category. The social fabric must, therefore, be built around the interest of man, money playing only a facilitating role. It is the failure of the present socio- political system to*

*determine the directions of development based on the “man standard”, obtained through the sublimation of human passions, which is responsible for the multifarious problems with which society is confronted today.*

Bartoli wrote (1999) “when social relationship have taken on the phantasmagoric aspect of relationships between objects and when money has been transmogrified from a useful instrument into an idol, economic activity ceases to be regulated in the service of life and alienation sets in. Alienation is anti-creation, the major obstacle to the accomplishment of the task of humankind. It is an attack on freedom which freedom must overcome.”<sup>22</sup>

SreeSree’s concept of economics is in the service of life in continuity through generations. Economics is a management function. He said, “To manage the go of life with every progressive step is economy. It is not the fact that material economy is the stay of life, but it is true and an eternal fact that chaste and compatible economy of genetics is the wealth of the world, though foolish conception foregoes it; origin of economic adjustment in family and country crops up from chaste, healthy and compatible eugenic relation within same clans”.<sup>23</sup> Here He offers a definition of economy which echoes the root meaning of economics, the

administration (Greek *Nomos*) of the house (Greek *oikos*). He stresses more on economic adjustment in family and country and attributes the same to proper conjugal life of men and women. If the leaders don't have proper conjugal life, he asserts, the aberration and disgust reflects in their approaches in goading the country. So he stresses on principles of respectable partner selection on the basis of many functions such as age, health, cultural acquisition, family tradition, social standing and economic condition.

Here economic consideration is one of the many but not the only, contrary to money standard perception of money earning as the prime reason of selection. Money standard perception of preference makes human beings susceptible to accept corruption as norm, where accumulation of more money by any means is acceptable. SreeSree emphasized that the means of earning ought to be honest and earning is to be seen as the result of the proper service a person offers out of his/her sense of responsibility. He cautioned that if one wants a mentally, physically and spiritually strong next generation he/she must not feed them from the earning which is undue. This is true of a nation too and the reason of much of the ills that the world faces today. He offers reasoning from spiritual angle.

According to him, spirituality is the reasoning of cause and effect whose insight is valid for generations because it appreciates the values of inter-interestedness and inter-connectedness with a sense of gratitude to the nature and progenitors. Satyanusaran or The Pursuit of Truth, penned through over a night in 1910 at Hemaitpur in erstwhile Bengal, presents the definition of spirituality he offered.

He, on the basis of profoundly spiritual economic activities from 1917 to 1945 in Bengal centering the village Hemaitpur, realized that re-establishing primacy of Man over money demands some pre-conditions. First, the man should not be consumerist but fulfilling needs without any compromise. Second, more than rights, he/she should be concerned about duties with love. Love is the desire of see the other of one's attachment staying in sound health, mind and joy that goads one's actions. Third, he/she should have the mentality to serve, and enjoy the fruit of return from people as his/her honorarium. Such serving mentality would never allow him to become poor. This mentality will transcend generations, the greatest gift a man can offer to the nation. Fourth, everyone should do manual work and every family must have its own kitchen garden and a home workshop. In the kitchen garden family would gradually learn how the nature gives us, how we should nurture them and the value of maintenance.

Home workshop of own needs would make everyone realize the value of skill and technology in life. "Domestic agriculture and industry with conscientious labour and existential uphold is the normal wealth of life."<sup>24</sup> He explained the development of the Aryan social system on the basis of this while referring to its natural sustenance through thousands of years despite numerous shocks and tremors.

Avocation according to everyone's instinct is the fifth precondition because satisfaction and a sense of contribution inhabit them who can work according to their prominent tendencies of contribution. Kitchen garden and home workshop would make parents identify the knack of the children by observing their natural preference of work. Education for making them actively profitable to themselves and to the society begins in the family, SreeSree said. To Him, a country is as good as it is able to utilize potential and work propensity of its young according to their instinct. This demands a strong family education first and then institutional supplementation because "education is to edit the experience and knowledge that nurture our existence with every progressive push"<sup>25</sup>.

That 'Man Standard' application forbids doles and subsidies ( except in rarest of rare occasions to uphold life of poorest of the poor) is the sixth precondition

because capital obtained without labour leads to both end corruption-for the disburser and the taker. The disburser considers his/her role as the agent of the state as the right to get share of the money to be disbursed. The taker gradually gets idle and infused with begging mentality. When SreeSree's disciples from Pakistan came to India during partition in 1947, SreeSree asked them not to take any dole, depend on their own skill, formal and informal education, and small money to eke out living. Most of them followed and succeeded. Not only this, even during that period of great distress they continued offering oblation every morning to SreeSree, as if it is duty of theirs to feed the Guru (the ideal personified) before everything else.

Last but not the least, 'Man Standard' evolves first in human mind and practice, and then it becomes an extension for the society, nation and globe. One must revere someone from whom he naturally gets inspiration in the go of life and connectedness to others. If he/she likes to offer him/her something as a token of respect and duty to someone very own, an emotional intelligence sets in .The desire to offer drives his intelligence towards earning. There, the advice of the beloved on the right path of earning goads him/her for honest ways of earning because he/she knows that as the golden way of the ideal or Guru. SreeSree said,<sup>26</sup>

Any gratuitous unrestricted daily offer to Superior Beloved achieved through energetic volition and ability, renders one gradually abler and abler with an undaunted energy within—that makes one rocky in his stand where others quiver in a stormy blast—and that is called "Samarthi Yoga."

He introduced economic practices for his disciples to prepare them to work as per high ideal for developing self, environment, family and society and nation. So the individual practice of Istavritty or oblation to the superior beloved every morning is only complete when the disciple offers expenses of two meals to two needy persons, one from his/her brotherhood and other from the distressed on every 30<sup>th</sup> day. So he/she is compelled to search that distressed person and get an exposure of people's deprivation. He/she cannot boast of the offering because the other person is considered his/her own. Do we boast for upkeep of our parents, wife or children? This traditional value of Indian family SreeSree wanted to be extended for the cause of automatic service to the society.

The practice has other importance too. Once a person has the natural instinct and habit of giving, he/she would feel it bad to snatch from others. Corruption is snatching of undue from others. So it is expected that



such a regular practice would enlighten people about sharing their own earning with others. Sharing is an old civilizational value of ours. It is a very old practice to offer some part of one's food for insects and birds during the beginning of eating. The practitioners are expected to dislike corrupt practices naturally.

SreeSree urged for searching such practices in every civilization and to bring into use to make people realize the joy of giving. Much of indiscriminate urbanization and the money mania is taking this great virtue away, and with its obliteration increases our population of mentally poor and nutritionally starved. Increase of money flow is no answer to this chronic disease that industrial age population is afflicted with.

In the South Asian context, this question has grown in importance because we have distinct practices of *Guru-sishya* and *Pir-murid* traditions in all South Asian countries. Such traditions are said to have great impact on chaste individual, family and social life. It is often reported that such and such leaders of the society and country are devotees or followers of such and such spiritual man. But when the same persons are utilizing their power to amass disproportionate property and destroying the quality of public services, it appears that greed is more powerful than the bonding to the spiritual

greats. On the other hand we find such leaders whose acts make us proud as countrymen.

Studies on Calvinistic ethics demonstrated how development in Europe was influenced by it. The management studies lay stress on emotional-intelligence in shaping right leadership. Indian tradition of leadership-followership in every sphere of life is eulogized for its efficiency in this aspect. Indian tradition stresses that beliefs and good practices are obtained from a guru, parents and family. When these are followed in earnest makes an individual worthy of being and becoming. He/she is able to become wise, tactical, connected to the society and country with sense of duty, responsibility towards future generation, fulfilling to the aspiration of ancestral generations, caring to people and honest in transactions of all sorts.

We need leaders of such qualities whose policies would not democratise allurements of corruption but would uplift people with all their energy and resources in the service of society and country. It would be possible when such leaders of ours are staunch believers in love and service to the people, and stand tall against all types of deviations, how-so-ever lucrative these may be. How this strength comes?

Amitava Kundu wrote (1987), *“Thakur advocated a life and livelihood of compassionate service. He believed*

*that a society with well-defined class categories (that do not coincide with income categories) can organize its production process in a manner that elates and activates labours and other factors of production, if the members of the society accept the 'man standard'. Such an organization, by its very definition, precludes exploitation of man by man and also of nature by man.*

*On every individual, Thakur Anukulchandra maintained, rests the responsibility of the well-being of not only himself but also of his family, community, nation and the entire human race. The self-interest of man must be so enlarged that the possible conflicts between the welfare at different levels of his "self" are harmonized. If an individual fails in caring for his higher 'self' and the environment, he will not be able to sustain even his limited self-interest in the long run.*

*Thakur stressed the inseparability of individual interest from that of the society, and this constitutes the basis of his "integral philosophy of life" and provides a different perspective to human behaviour. It is heartening that of late, several eminent economists have come to realize the need to enlarge the base of self-interest –to include the concern of group, commune or nation-which alone can bring about social optimality through individual decisions."<sup>27</sup>*

SreeSree said that it is essential to get rid of bad habits and forming good habits for the solution of economic problems. Lal wrote (2004), “Thakur further said that want is caused by defects in our nature but wealth flows from good acts.... It is very good to foster the habit and spirit of service and charity in children from his very infancy. This urge gradually makes them efficient in earning.”<sup>28</sup>

‘Man Standard’ practices require self-help by people themselves besides giving to others as own. Such self-help is not at the cost of others but a way to increase one’s capacity for self-sustenance, growth and helping others. He/ she can practice self-help in true sense who has the determination and aspiration for better life through work. SreeSree created the practice of Swastayani (the practices for good existence and progress) in 1935 integrating good health norms, motor-sensory coordination in decision making and action, savings, enterprise building and ploughing back capital into enterprise with identification of one’s own instinct and ideal-centrism to create a situation in which the question of unemployment does not arise.

He asked to research about presence of these practices within the success of various enterprising communities. He talked (1945) about a sound and vibrant market that helps small investments to remain dynamic and

engaged in productive work. He liked low and balanced inflation as that helps low investment in big way. He said that the high inflation decreases the money value and hits the poor hard. Following the principle of Man Standard, a state should always think in terms of saving its people from shock and tremor of economic distress. The policies should be based on this consideration.

SreeSree said, “No environment, no existential stay.” No development effort can be trans-generationally successful till it accepts the principle of evolving together with the nature. Human being should conduct himself/herself with a sense of acknowledgement to the nature. This should be the function of family and institutional education to prepare future generation towards this goal of trans-generational ethical progress.

Bartoli raised the question, “How, when ‘rethinking development’, can economists speculate on the choices to be made and the tasks to be accomplished in order to improve the well-being of peoples without considering the relationship between the economic factor and the milieu in all its varied aspects? How can they, without disastrous consequences, ignore the history of the civilizations and their cultures, on the basis of which development must make its way?”<sup>29</sup> The discussion on SreeSree’s approach and action from 1917 to 1969, and

the continuation of his 'Man Making Movement' has much of the answer to Bartoli's question raised in 1961.

Bela Banerjee observed (2002), "For last seventy seven years, the 'Man Making Movement' of Satsang has grown implementing His experiments encompassing all aspects of individual, family, community and country. So far so in this consumerist age, Satsangees are the Island of exception being believers and practitioners of benefaction in material life and sincere seekers in spiritual life. In this belief they have wiped out pauperism from lives and have contributed in sharing prosperity with fellow beings."<sup>30</sup> To save the civilization, the world needs to shift focusing on man, not as beneficiary or target but as a sane living existence that realizes the value of the other- both as nature and fellow human being. How to implement it draws us to the second question raised in introduction:

*What is the actual sense of the world? Isn't this sense built in societies through generations? Is this the same across the world? How to transform this through the creative skill of men and women? Do we require a "paradigm" or example to be applied to countries and communities for this transformation? What would be the nature of such transformation?*

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Model or Models of Development?**

Economists are divided in opinion about the relevance of single model of development for all the countries and regions. The reality is models developed on the basis of reality check and reality construction in one part of the world, in application to other parts, failed to a great extent in getting desired result. Not only this, these created great disharmony in societies and gradually poisoned the fabric of the countries, destroying their cultural roots.

Myrdal recommended that economists in countries “lagging behind in development” should construct a completely new “science” specially designed for the solving of their problems and should mistrust all imported “sciences” which, to a considerable degree, are “only rationalizations of the dominant interests of the industrialized countries promoting them”.<sup>31</sup>

Human development is about realizing human potential in all spheres of life and living, with self improvement in tandem with neighbors’ and the natures’. Development is also the effort to reach mature state. For every human being, growing old is natural. But the human mind, the playground of passion, emotion and intelligence is enlivened by purpose and action. Once it

slips into dullness due to lack of the driving impulses, potential to evolve ceases to unfurl. The planning for development in a country has the function to ensure that for any scheme, project or program undertaken, the urge of self development of the people should increase. Such an urge is the function of numerous variables of which values and culture are no less important.

We don't find such an effect of various development programs for some reasons. Firstly, the assumption behind such programs is the belief that countrymen, especially poor are only to be pitied and they have no capacity. Doling out some sum to them cuts the root of their urge to work for improvement of life. Secondly, the programs of other sort also use idioms alien to the people. Such programs are based mostly on assumptions that in every sphere our countrymen are backward. They need way outs from other parts of the world to be followed for uplift. Such a logic strikes at the root of people's esteem and turns them into reluctant recipients.

Next to these, every problem is seen as economic and thus is thought to be solved by offering economic packages. In reality problems are not of that nature in many segments. Lastly, programs are planned in such ways that people's own resources are overlooked in



preference for input from outside. Thus development remains a phenomenon of distant inputting for making people believe that thousands of years of their ancestral existence does not offer them any strength. They have to forfeit all their old deposits in the altar of development.

SreeSree said, "Can't you try to bring a stable change in tradition, custom and contrivances of culture and then uphold your civilization? Won't you be wisely rational, tolerably conservative with a balanced foresight-mentally and physically- in accordance with your family traditions and socio-national traits? Only this will protect you and push forward your existential flow. And what is more, you will find that a smiling providence will make you resonate with a lore of love and so be blessed to survive."<sup>32</sup>

He presented the concept of Indo-Aryan socialism based on the interpretation of the Aryan society's normative laws of sustenance. He said,<sup>33</sup>

Organized equitable individual liberty with an apt economic provisional balance and biological evolution of culture that makes the being progressive to the unbounded eternal entity is the fundament of Socialistic Indo-Aryanism.

Despite much aberrations creeping in, the internal propensity of correction from time to time made its continuation a reality. In every correctional ideology and practice such as Buddhism, Jainism, Bhagavatism, Vaishnavism and Bhakti, aberrations were removed keeping fundamental the same. This was due to gradual build up of social functionality on the basis of certain values few of which have been mentioned before. This offers a lesson-- a civilization can advance on the basis of its own tradition, and thus continues its existence minimizing impact of shocks and tremors.

It is definite that in case of other civilizational people, their own pattern of progress would be obtainable. It's impossible that the stabilized traditions are in place but no sketch of their progress is obtainable. It's not also required to assess the standard of all civilizational people on the same basis. The common basis should be expertise of the population to negotiate with the nature with minimum use of its elements with a bias for regenerative action. This expertise would vary extensively.

Through generations, such expertise was acquired and transformed into traditions with plain living as aspiration. From this point, divergence can be historically traced between civilizations. While civilizations with continuity nourished the dominant

value of plain living along with high thinking, civilizations with multiple breaks went away from this virtue by espousing the cause of aggrandizement and violence. At many points, many civilizations cut the root of their traditions.

No nation can advance by cutting the root of its tradition. Rather its education should be developed in such a manner that the tradition gets modernized with main threads remaining intact. So the foremost task in planning is to ensure that education does not snatch away the people from their root or incapacitate them from doing the work that their forefathers practiced. Rather it should help them improving such work practices besides providing a wider and ennobling world view. This is possible when due respect to the knowledge accumulated over generations is reflected in education and the meaning of long-standing rituals are understood in proper perspective. Don't we need to utilize our indigenous knowledge system (IKS) to educate our children?<sup>34</sup>

IKS is expressed in indigenous peoples' work practices, rituals, beliefs, entertainment and religious forms of folk media, interpersonal communication ways, and their interaction with nature and neighboring communities. Utilizing IKS in development has two sides. In one side is realizing how IKS sustained the society till date. The

other side is sharing IKS with its reasoning to make the community feel esteemed. A society without esteem is bound to be impoverished which really happened for so long. All future plans need to make it a point that the internal strength of all societies should work for their progress. Otherwise development would remain a menace that spoils the humanity.

The beauty of IKS is that it offers an alternative for making progress really sustainable and ethical in contrast to the failing development path, which simply makes countries poorer in terms of huge per capita expense for the same. IKS needs a communication process to travel within, trans-community and across region with least noise and cost. Variety of folk media forms performed at different times of the year by the village talents combine well with livelihood, culture and religion of the people through generations. IKS has also been well reflected in folk media message. Development planning has a lopsided preference for mass media and new media, and that is costly and really distant from the people. The time has come to consider altering the communication strategy for development.

The fundamental pre-condition of progress is the right ethics and the urge of development executives to work for community welfare. They should be *Swahridaya* (sympathetic and compassionate) to the people. Our

plan implementation suffers on this count heavily and this tendency is increasing. With this, the return on development input is diminishing gradually. On this issue, planning needs to be sensitive.

Plan should reflect a perspective of its natural interlink and embeddedness in socio-cultural mosaic of the country. This perspective utilizes people's own cultural resource to make them believe that they too are worthy of contributing towards development. Increasing social contribution through participation of people in every phase of action from problem identification through problem prioritization, resource identification, natural leadership emergence, own resource mobilization, field action and sharing joy of completion to creating resource sustainability regime can go a long way to make development meaningful in the life of the community.

So the next level of planning should utilize methods which ensure such a higher level of people's involvement. As the paradigm of development is shifting towards ecologically sustainable people's development, the methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), which were developed for the earlier outside-agency driven limited participatory approach, may fall short of the requirement.

The duty of plan implementation facilitators should be reorienting peoples' preference for own communication resources and information networks to create bias for development on their own terms. Thus IKS, developed over generations within spatial limit and community level with or without cultural migration among communities dispersed spatially, needs to be tried in macro level and cluster planning to turn own resources as prime movers in village and cluster development.

The challenge before the next phase of planning is how to take villagers away from the perception imbibed in them by development executives and village politicians over decades that development was impossible without financial help from outside the village. It's important that IKS, through aiding in development initiatives' social action component, brings down development cost and convince people that their own resources are equally valuable.

IKS is trans-generational in nature. So people harbor it and practice it either knowing reasons or without knowing reasons. When reasons sink into oblivion over long period of time, IK practice loses its strength due to missing of links between its different threads. When reasons are alive in people's mind, these provide them the strength of practice. Role of multi-disciplinary team in development program is to support villagers with

restatement of reasons of their own resources, systems and enlivening the same through action and celebrations. This is so, because *for people, actions often acquire traits of celebrations; thus celebrations become roots of entry into action.*<sup>35</sup> It would be possible to develop the villages to a great extent from within, if the meaningfulness of this link becomes clear to them.

So far most of the government initiatives fared badly on this count. Gross and superficial connectedness was there but the community minds lacked perceiving the programs as their own. So primary school and hospital buildings were never taken care of by villagers as their own assets. The missed link was government functionaries' below minimum functional impact. For their duties to deliver improvement in village life, most of the functionaries considered these buildings nothing but temporary spatial hubs. Only man to man connectedness could make such hubs meaningful in villagers' life.

The time has come when we must accept two statements as axioms in determining policy of development.<sup>36</sup>

*Meaningful village development lies in assimilating development action into villagers' broad perception as their own way and resource.*

*As every development action can take any alternative out of many options available, utilizing peoples' own resources and knowledge system are the best alternatives to be followed.*

The World Bank's *World Development Report 1994* (WDR) focused on infrastructure for development. Public utilities such as power, telecommunications, piped water supply, sanitation, sewerage, solid waste collection and disposal, and piped gas are needed at every home, and workplace. By statistics, installations of these physical infrastructures can be measured. But we have experienced that until the habit of people changes, much of these would become items which escalate cost by way of wastage and misuse. Latrines constructed with high subsidy are not used by many. The buildings constructed under government schemes are not getting care from people, as if government departments are supposed to do the maintenance. So the challenge lies for behavior change communication (BCI). BCI demands a fresh strategy from within the society as imported strategies have been failing miserably.

Public works (roads, dams and canals) is the other group of infrastructure. With good workmanship roads, dams and canals may become trans-generational assets of the country. These are areas of high expertise. However



condition of roads and canals speak a lot about the work execution. Compromise in construction quality is rampant, demonstration of an unholy nexus working against the interest of the country.

Urban transport, railways, ports, airports and waterways are the lifelines of the country. When mass media, new media and postal services are included, these infrastructures are supposed to be connecting people with unprecedented ease. The success lies in translating these infrastructures into facilities for seamless interchange of ideas on the foundation of own cultural strength of communities and countries. If a community and a nation suffer on that foundation due to infrastructure development, fault does not lie with the infrastructure itself. The fault lies with software policy pursued.

It is often lost in the buzz and business of infrastructure development that ultimately individual, family, community and the nation dwell in their softwares - the instincts, emotion, the culture of work and leisure, ideas of connectedness and evolving into better human beings, and the drive to innovate in solving problems even with slightest disturbance of the nature and the neighbor. Every program of development should have this aspect properly attended in the culturally acceptable manner. Participation of people and

acceptance of any infrastructure as own by them, which often eludes our programs, should be given equal stress.

The tendency to look into infrastructure and social sector development as two different domains often create mismatch. Every civilization accepted the importance of infrastructure as the site, locale, connector and transmitter of the ideas, activities, events and celebrations. On minute observation it is understood that most of the infrastructures got dilapidated or ruined but many of the ideas, activities, events and celebrations travelled with us for thousands of years. Such finer stabilizers of the civilization should not be wiped out in course of planned development. Rather the ethos of plan should be this spirit. Then only we can really posit our drive to modernize in country's perspective. Till now the rate of development of infrastructures and the quality of activities utilizing infrastructures make us remember the law of diminishing return.

India can be taken as an instance of a country with continuity of its civilization. It has a great plan apparatus to commission every plan. The question is how this apparatus progressively learns from chronic failure by coming out from the straight jacket solutions to repeated fiascos of the development programs. We

replaced family planning by family health and welfare and then by national rural health mission. National Literacy Mission yielded place to *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* (SSA) which achieved very little. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) was supposed to be people's own program, community feeding their own malnourished and offering nutrition and health education to children and women besides preparing 3-6 years children for schooling. For every project, co-terminus with block or municipality, ten year was the time frame to be transformed from a solely government-run program into a community's own program. Now it is one of the regular government services. Almost no community took it up on their own. So from a gimmick to a political agenda of various outfits at grass-root, ICDS demonstrates below-par social benefit for the people. The opportunity cost lost in 2G spectrum doling to industrial groups and the cost overrun in infrastructure projects tell the story of the sin that is growing by leaps and bounds eroding the vital of the country.

Any country aspiring to continue its development journey to stay civilized (not in the sense of aggression or domination on others but in the spirit of a society offering its capability to serve the world for peace and prosperity) needs strengthening itself from within based on its own modernizing traditions. The tradition trail of

a country or a group of countries having common root (as is the case of South Asian countries) is a long-operating trans-generational function of interaction of its population with five elements viz. land, water, energy, sky and air. The atmosphere of the region has a deep influence on the thought pattern of the people there, which is discernible over a long period of time. The trend in development of Idea, technology, communication and IKS stabilized over hundreds of generations as the continuing response trail of human beings to five elements sustains ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress. This stabilized development pattern is the civilization in continuance.

On the other side we have found there were civilizational discontinuities in several parts of the world. Old traditions were broken by new group of people through coercion, aggrandizement and decimation of people. The new traditions built upon such breaks are also aggressive as if these are in hurry to rule over other denominations of people. The spree of industrialization run by the addiction of power and pelf ,and insensitive to the nature's carrying capacity ran riot to the world over last hundred years. Prior to it, creating base of industrialization and urbanization on exploitation of other countries had the same aggression. And that is believed to be development standard for entire world.

Amitava Kundu observed (1987), *“Recently, there has been talk about the greening of economics. It is argued that the lust of man for material wealth is forcing the production activities in several spheres to be carried beyond safe limits, causing serious environmental problems. The traditional framework of economics, with only peripheral concern for ecology, can hardly provide solutions to these problems. It is therefore, observed that unless the framework of analysis is expanded to include many of these crucial environmental parameters, the unfettered pursuit of material well-being in the short run would lead to a total disaster for the human race.*

*Such a crisis, however, would not arise if a man is governed by the integral philosophy of life. Thakur believed that man and nature are two inseparable entities. He could not, therefore, imagine prosperity of people or society being achieved through the destruction of the equilibrium in nature. Only a happy combination of natural bounties with qualities and capabilities in people can lead to optimal utilization of the resources of the earth which, in turn, would pave the way for rapid development of every nation.*

*Greening of economics for Thakur would, therefore, not be simply including certain additional environmental parameters in the traditional economic analysis but*

*developing new paradigm of development on the basis of the enlightened self-interest of man. This implies not an attempt to preserve nature while promoting human welfare, but to humanize economics itself.”<sup>37</sup>*

Bartoli echoed this in broadest sense in 1998 in writing “An economy, considered as a working and trading society, increasingly needs to be organized, not in terms of the ‘mastery’ of man over nature, but of a harmony between the two, and above all, with human development at its end. Economic activity would thus be replaced in the context of existence and responsibility; by that very fact, ethics becomes the discipline best placed to help it redefine itself.”<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps Bartoli thinks about the practice of ethics in running the state which he calls the discipline of ethics. It is in the interest of country’s progress that the drivers of political economy have a clear vision of it. Leaders of the country have to lead the state for proper organizing of the people into functional divisions that solves chaos into inter-interested co-existence and growth. SreeSree gave emphasis of nurturing and keeping individual traits intact in the interest of the society. Regarding socialism and nationalization he spoke out in 1945. He said, “... If we accept that private owners would harm the country, how it is appropriate to say that leaders of the nationalized enterprises won’t harm? Are they sages or

greatmen? Sages or greatmen never curb individual right and individuality..... Individual right is not bad, rather its non-existence is harmful. That hinders growth. But such education should be in place so that intelligence to serve others selflessly increases and character gets adjusted.... Even if food is uncertain, it is better that men earn by own initiative. It helps increasing experience, capacity to start some enterprise, personality and satisfaction. The Aryan system had balance among individuality, social control, state control, and allegiance to the culture and the ideal. So the path to harm was narrow, and the path to growth wide open.”<sup>39</sup>

It has been observed that the states, in current dispensation are unable to play the “permanent, but different role”<sup>40</sup> the state must play. The necessity of new model of state came to fore. It would be supposed to spell out clearly about the function of maintaining economic stability and ensuring basic welfare measures and infrastructure, besides negotiating between the demand of industrialization and conservation of nature for nature’s sake and future generation. What SreeSree said in 1960s about state acquired new importance in this context. SreeSree said,<sup>41</sup>-

Administrative organization of the people in a varietal grouping of individuals with similar

instincts that makes each one serve others with an auto- induced instinctive hanker creating an inter-related cosmos in the disintegrated chaos of individuals—ever enunciating the principle of life and growth and thus evolving into a natural concentration of constituted monitorial monarchy is the consummation of the republican State.

He stressed on Varnashram based approach of state function without aberrations<sup>42</sup>-

If traditional Varnashramic division of professional labour be established,—rinsed and renovated,—unemployment will be off, efficiency will be on, capability will spring up, unfurling of instinctive talents will effulge, State will stay on unresisting!

He envisioned the outline of politics and law of such a state<sup>43</sup>-

Interested, Interdependent acceleration to becoming of every individual by which being is nurtured according to its position and special aptitude, with due resistance to evil,—that's the Politics and Law to follow.



The question of ecological sustainability vis-à-vis short-term need and long term greed of man, the aggressive tactics of industrialized countries for expanding production base and market to other countries, and the interaction between the system of production and consumption with the environment acquire importance in search of “new alliance”<sup>44</sup> between humans and nature. Such a possibility of alliance depends much on critical information usage by different societies, the consciousness to stay as a part of nature, and accepting the nature’s grand law of evolving together.

During last five hundred years the world witnessed man’s tampering with the grand law. In the ego of being the most intelligent animal on the Earth, he forgot that the intelligence, superior to others, is not for destruction because destruction is normal in animality (that should not require one to be Man). It is for increasing the chance of the mother Earth to live and let live much longer than the animality can offer because only then her best creation can sustain itself disease free- from psychic and physical types. Instead of ascertaining ecological cost in money terms to prove the point, the man standard application may offer a better understanding of the reality and possibility of correction.

More recently, the problem of environmental sustainability has begun to preoccupy social economists such as Herman Daly and E.F. Schumacher and has led to the formation of groups such as Feasta. Daly has sought to get his discipline to see that the economy is a subset of the natural ecosystem and that its expansion is threatening to overwhelm the ecosystem's ability to regenerate the resources we use and to absorb the wastes we produce, Daly proposes that 'the path of economic progress must shift from growth (quantitative expansion) to development (qualitative improvement)'. Schumacher also warned of environmental depletion and, like Gandhi, emphasised the need for appropriate technology, village economies and an ethical economics as a way to restore people to their position as the point of the economic system and 'not merely a factor in production'. Today the good work done by the social economists needs to be expanded and deepened into a deeply ecological economics and Lutz cites the familiar portents of environmental collapse in order to renew our commitment to the task. A respectful, caring attitude is needed toward the Earth if it is to flourish. We must avoid the trap of preserving only those things known to be beneficial to man. Here lies real danger, as our limited knowledge of ecological systems seen through selfish human-centred lenses is the biggest threat to biodiversity and therefore sustainability.<sup>45</sup>

In this connection Ruskin and Gandhi's insight grow in importance. Mark A. Lutz, in search of economics for common man, points out<sup>46</sup>, "following Ruskin, 'Gandhi saw economics as meaningful only if it pursued the right end: an economic system providing the basic necessities while incorporating the social values of human dignity, non-violence and creative labour.' His goal was therefore to create viable local economies free from dependence on the machine and factory system of the industrialised world."

In *Economics of the Common Good*, Lutz showed both moral and natural limits to growth. He opined 'clearly social justice and ecological sustainability are two sides of the same coin' and that we have a duty to social fairness to maintain the planet's livability. That the logic of substitutability of a scarce resource that Standard economics stresses or the 'myth of substitutability' is not tenable, Herman Daly has shown.

Manmade capital cannot be substituted for natural capital. They are complementary - both are needed for the production of goods. The time has come when a new production regime should be established where man made capital utilization gradually brings down degradation of nature. This takes us to reply the question - Is it possible to provide human dimension to

development for maintenance and blossoming of life of all everywhere in the world and how?

After five hundred years of plunder of the nature and human beings by fellow human beings, the time has come for a revolution in approach to development. It calls for decreasing exploitation of five elements of nature by reigning the greed and lust, and utilizing the man-created element of Information in the service of nature and humanity.

## **Chapter V**

### **Information, the Sixth Element and Communication, the Most Underutilized**

Last three decades (1980 onwards) have added another element to the existing five elements utilized in the journey of the human through ages.<sup>47</sup> The evolution of human knowledge and its practical aspect of technology over thousands of years has reached a qualitative transformation by developing information technology and its physical foundation, the computer. It is a knowledge evolution highpoint we are in. This is high point because of the continuous nature of knowledge development which has today brought us to this stage. We find that the computer logic and language approximates the concepts in Vedic Mimamsa<sup>48</sup> by Sage Jaimini, a text of long antiquity traced to the period of the Vedas and after. The information has emerged as the sixth element because it can be utilized by human being in the way he/ she utilizes any form of the five elements. Every evolution is a qualitative transformation founded on the basis of gradual realizations through ages. The human element of information has evolved to transform us into contributors to the preservation and upholding of nature in the process of progress.

Information is the element that offers power in all connotations yet it is abstract as its possession as a physical property is almost impossible. The capitalist trend of physical possession can't limit and harm it. The point of critical importance is whether we would handle it as a capitalist's asset for money spinning or as an asset of communal character.

The battle in economics and politics has so far revolved over possession of five elements by individuals or societies, and as in any battle, there have been fighting economic classes- the capitalist, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Lyotard predicted (1984), "it is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour."<sup>49</sup> It is true that information is now exchanged as a major commodity in advanced capitalist states and the life there "is oriented toward technological development, that is toward the accumulation of knowledge and toward high levels of complexity of information processing."<sup>50</sup> Yet the nature of new media-its pervasiveness and decentered control presents opportunities of information being utilized creatively for goal-oriented development initiatives.

Marc Porat defined, "Information is data that have been organized and communicated."<sup>51</sup> Castells agreed to this definition in his 1996 book, while trying to understand the nature of information utilization in society. He wrote, "...I argue that information, in its broadest sense, e.g. as communication of knowledge, has been critical in all societies, including medieval Europe which was culturally structured, and to some extent unified, around scholasticism, that is, by and large an intellectual framework."<sup>52</sup> Information, as the sixth element, needs to be used in this sense as the utilitarian component for any community.

The knowledge is to be open as a resource, the open source activists of new media are demanding. This echoes the Indian tradition of intellectuality which believes in the free nature of knowledge and distinct ways of acquiring it as a continuous collective effort. Such a stand accepts that no information stands alone and no idea belongs to single individual only. In the trail of knowledge evolution it emerges as unfurling of creativity and logic.

Looking at nature of information, it can be said that any reality pertaining to body, nature, art and architecture, and soft representations like mental culture becomes information once it is given the form for its transmission and presentation. New media changes it by

instantiation, mediation, remediation, compression, storage, addition, simulation and interactivity. Thus the information gets readied as the resource. It's like iron, the ore is melted, cast, pigged, mixed with many a metal and used in umpteen ways. For development of heavy industry iron waited to be mined. Likewise the nature, community customs and rituals, IKS - all remain to be mined for ushering into a new approach of development. What can we return to nature by utilizing it?

In preservation of plants and animals, the information about these can go a long way. In understanding the environmental impact of any big infrastructure project, simulation can generate more stringent model than the real situation. Thus ecosystem maintenance is facilitated. Exploitation of forest resources and generative cycle of nature- information on both helps in realistic planning for sustainable livelihood in the lap of nature. The trans-generational knowledge of indigenous communities on their work, leisure, pleasure and reforms through the time line may offer solution to many a problems created by indiscriminate exploitation of nature.

The poverty and unemployment, as seen by the educated eyes having no experience of grass-root, actually differs from the understanding of the people.



Understanding these from their own approach, and effecting small doses of changes in situation with an eye towards integration in their psyche needs a closure of information on the problem. The common sense solutions, and natural sensors of people need to be included in information about them. People of different ages, places and ethnicities developed different responses in interaction with their surrounding environment. Five elements' traditional scholarship is multidimensional. It is available in oral and written textual and contextual literature. This endogenous information should drive the development initiatives to ensure ESTGP. Thus information would optimize the progress.

Emergence of information as the sixth element augurs well for the future of people's development because it saves time and wasteful expenditure of other five elements. It has created the possibility of human-nature-culture-computer interface. Interface posits seemingly discrete systems into contact and communication with one another. Interfaces raise doubt about boundaries between man and machine, hardware and software, the virtual and real, and likewise between nature and human, and human and His culture. So, interfaces hint at our real position in the telescopic world with nature as the all-inclusive existence which we are a part.

New media interface shapes communication and information access, thereby presenting many possibilities. It has also presented the scope to communication for higher level of utilization as hindrances of capitalism won't be able to tie it up with the profit motivation. Once new media and folk media take the centre stage of communication scenario, development and progress are bound to be liberated from the compulsion of critical dependence on capital, and hence on the rich. This requires a pro-active role of the state.

Wilbur Schramm visualized the impact of mass media for development in 1962. Dr. Schramm and his team, on invitation from Government of India (GOI) to advice on the development of information and communication infrastructure, suggested utilizing media as the magic multiplier to convince and inspire people towards development. On his advice, GOI established Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) as the nodal institute to research appropriate communication strategy and to guide development executives as well as government communication functionaries with the aim of accelerating development in dominantly rural India. However, he revised this stance within next 15 years. As he addressed members of IIMC in 1977, he confessed how wrong it was.<sup>53</sup> He said:<sup>54</sup>

*Activity at the village level is the only means, I would say, of effective village change and whereas communication has to travel down, it has got to travel up and, much more important it has got to travel round at the village level. People have to work together and discuss together. Only when communication can build itself into the social structure, it is going to show any real hope of extensive results. Only when media channels can mix with inter-personal channels, and with the organization in the village are you going to have the kind of development that you will like. In other words, the idea of big media, of talk- down communication, is something, which is not going to work.*

Schramm's later observation points to the futility of utilizing mass media as dominant media in rural population. Reality check across the developing world attests that by not utilizing own communication resource, governments not only delayed development but created dependency on developed world. While the developed countries really got richer in terms of economy by such transactions of technology, machines and allied software of all sorts, poorer countries created a group of corrupt intermediaries in the name of leaders, and development providers. So development,

mimicking others, created a despair among people. The restlessness in such countries is quite but natural.

The study of communication in the Western world got its reason from Aristotle and its sustenance in the capitalism driven state system. As capital seeks profit and state patronization, communication has been reasoned to exist to serve these ends. Almost entire tradition of Western communication, be it fashioned by technological determinism or administrative approach or critical approach, never looked beyond the Greek city states. Naturally an urban orientation is discernible if we consider dominant features of communication pedagogy in the West. One such dominant feature is visual orientation of communication application, the other being putting technology and technological media in the drivers' seat.

Naturally then, communication gets target driven. Otherwise who would fund for the research? Observing the effect of communication practiced and researched raises few questions. Is big funding absolutely necessary for natural phenomenon communication to be perfected? What should be the purpose of drive for perfection – immediate gain of power and profit or advancement of all with betterment of human race in synergy with the environment?

Countries of the world need to look inward in search of their own soft instrument i.e. the process and event of communication as people have used it through generations. If development is really for the people, first of all its instruments must be their own and within utilization capacity. India, as a case exemplifies it better. A closer look into four Vedas, Puranas arising out of the Vedas and latter Vedas such as Natya Veda whose age goes back 2000 years to few hundred years before Christ, gives several glimpses of how Indian sages and seers were gradually theorizing various aspects of communication at a much larger scale encompassing sound, speech, language, intent of message, place of emotion, structure of message and so on. The science of sound, how it utilizes different shapes of building structures and open space was also recorded.

All these gradually developed out of empirical evidences culled from the early and later Vedic societies, which were developing, modifying and stabilizing their *samskaras* (cultural ways comprising events to mark important phases in human living as individual, family member and society member with elaborate actions and incantations conveying meaningfulness of life and interconnectedness of society members), Varna (it was nothing but 'equi-cultural cluster of families' to begin with) and Chaturashrama (Duties and rights from childhood to old

age) over generations. Such societies were dominantly rural and remained so even after emergence of Sorosh Mahajanapadas (sixteen big towns) during 7<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> BC. In reality, Indian rural society remained unaffected by any sort of political upheaval for long until the British seized political power and tried to break the social fabric systematically.

Even today, we find that the Indian society is predominantly rural and following its social norms. Trans-generational communication during organizing *samskaras* at family level and festivals at community level helped socialization of children and integration of new groups and individuals. From the Vedic age amusement of people included various performances which later took the shape of Natya comprising *nritya* (dance), *geet* (song), *vadya* (accompanying instrumentation) and *abhinaya* (acting) – structure of communication to a big group.

Under the spell of Western influence on a miniscule group of political decision makers, like most other developing and under developed countries, India followed Western approach of media usage for development. However such strategy failed in villages due to absence of culture-sensitivity, ownership, access and intruding nature of mass media. Despite creation of a pan-Indian media network, mass communication in

India is mostly urbanized, westernized and status-quoist. It is sort of an accretion which hides the reality and creates an alienating impact on common man through representation of its make-believe heaven.

Donor-aided programs in Africa, Asia and South America are still in the magic spell of mass media which is unsustainable without prop. And the fallacy is if you are always propped, are you really standing on your feet? Paolo Freire, as an alternative to such a situation in South America, applied liberation theology in education and communication. He opined that every individual, to be free from internal and external oppression (the central purpose of development) should utilize dialogue as emancipator weapon.

Melkote and Steeves observed, "Within every major religion there are branches with intellectual and spiritual leaders making a strong theological argument for development as a process of liberation from injustice, discrimination and prejudice wherever they occur, including within religious organizations".<sup>55</sup> Attempts to utilize such arguments and related religious practices would naturally lead to other views of development. Successful and sustainable development communication demands identification of development as fulfillment of own perception about life, living and advancement too.

Communication for development needs to have certain values which are often absent in mass media based communication strategy and action. Further, by donating a TV set or a radio set, people can be addicted, spoilt and alienated from their culture as their leisure time is taken away from community-based entertainment. This is the sure way of gradual weakening of village festivals, social communication network, and time-sharing collectives. If development aspires to be ESTGP, modification of such strategy of communication is required. Rather strengthening of group communication events for deliberation among the members of community regarding developing communities from within needs to be resorted. The communication values ESTGP demands are-<sup>56</sup>

*Localism* as a value in communication to ensure that local development process utilizes local mores, folkways, folk talents and practices as channels, events, communicators and part of message. It ensures spontaneous village participation and cost-minimizing.

For replication of successful communication strategy in different areas, needs and peculiarities of those areas are to be understood. This requires a universal core component along with scope of *modification for acclimatization*. The government development programs have common components for all the areas.



However for success, which often eludes such programs, modification for acclimatization should be made an integral part of the program.

Communication should have a *development value*. In every development program, communicating the program through participants should be one motto. The strategy for the same is important as chronic information poverty and lack of functional education partially spell development failure. The minimum core communication component linked to deriving benefit from the programme should be one of the value addition aspects of the program. It brings down publicity cost as knowing benefits from the benefited person's inspired interpersonal and group communication has no hiring cost. Such a communication touches heart of the needy too.

To eliminate information poverty, communication process has the responsibility of absorbing relevant up-to-date information to produce and share proper message. At the same time, ensuring participatory message enhancement at village level is important. Bringing down the level of message distortion by vested interests and grapevine needs elimination or minimizing of multiple step flow of information. It also ensures message entropy.

IKS should be largely utilized in action phase to valorize communication for development. The *small circuit-information heavy value* can be properly utilized when the message is magnified at the level where it should be felt. Development programs should be clearly visible with all its details for the grass root people. Such programs should also be identified by people with their social milieu and livelihood. As the value of localism combines with information richness, *magnification value* enhances communication effectiveness through flexibility in utilizing communication elements.

Communication process must make communities realize their relevance, interdependence and interaction with the macro society and country to ensure that isolated isles of prosperity, which are mutually exclusive are not created. Until this *integrative value* is becoming natural in the process and content of communication, development would create conflicting demands without a scope of reconciliation.

Communicator is the frame of reference for the people. His or her personality gives the process a personality advantage. Amicable behaviour, character, *swahridaya* with fellowmen and action of the communicator are more important than anything else with regard to acceptance of message. Where the communicator does not draw respect, communication fails. This

*communicator value* failure on the part of development executives is to be blamed for many fiascos in development programs.

Effecting Trans-generationality of development needs to bring the story of success and its heroes into community memory. Folk media and folk-communication events are the best means of doing this with success. This is the *stabilizing value* of communication.

In the view of the UNDP experts, human development (henceforth HD) is simply the development “of” the people, “by” the people and “for” the people. The earliest reports on the subject (1990-1992) deal with the development “of” the people as an investment in human potential-be it in education, health or training-the aim being to enable individuals to work productively and creatively.<sup>57</sup> However in communication strategy for such a development, mass media bias was discernible in practice. As mass media installations are costly, the cost of development was high. Mass media can’t be intimate for people, so the result too was not impressive.

The 1993 HD report put people at the centre stage of economic and political change with aim of both serving people instead of people serving the market. 1994 HD report selected “sustainable HD” as the new paradigm.

HD Report 1995 was pluri-dimensional in scope. "It analyses all issues in society-whether economic growth, trade, employment, political freedom or cultural values-from the perspective of people. It thus focuses on enlarging human choices-and it applies equally to developing and industrial countries." <sup>58</sup>

This shift demands a relook into every aspect of the current trend in development approaches including information and communication. The development must be a function from within the society everywhere irrespective of East, West, North or South of the Earth. Henceforth continuity should not only be the reality of few civilizations but of every civilization on Earth in tandem with nature, where the contemporary is the point of convergence of the benefit of the past with the dream of the continuing progress in the future. So every development should lead to trans-generational progress by creating racial memory of achievement and preservation mantra with assurance of logic not hiding behind the facade of rituals. This assurance is to be discovered at three levels of semantics, semiotics and techniques of continuation.

For such an ambition of mankind, societies should have own communication ways of understanding own needs and apprising own resources which would lead to own action-initiatives. This demands transformation of

communication methods of development where outside has a minimal supportive role to play. The sense of community and society, from macro level to gradually enlarging micro level, where belongingness is the key would trigger action-initiatives for solving problems and opening up possibilities of benefits to more and more.

The limitations of the three methods Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) extensively used in development initiatives by GOs and NGOs led to the search of a method much more effective to ensure developing communities from within. Emerging approach to development also necessitated such a search. If RRA has been suited to the purpose of dominant paradigm for development, PRA and PAR belong to the purpose of human-centered welfare approach in development. But both purposes are fulfilled primarily by agencies from outside, with different level of people's participation as per the agencies desire to involve them.

As the consciousness of the grave ecological imbalance and its ominous consequences has dawned in us, the purpose of development is gradually accepted to be trans-generational with ecosystem sustainability. To ensure development in this ecologically sustainable development approach, highest level of people's

participation is *sine-qua-non*. Clearly this approach requires appropriate methods for villagers with the facilitator and assistant role for development workers from outside (as if they are the members of neighboring community). Participation of people in grass-root and cluster level planning, implementing and sustaining achievements through practice and renewal grows in importance. This is so as the ecosystem and human habitat preservation, contrary to discriminate felling of woods, denuding soil, and polluting air and water demands habitat members' involvement at micro and macro level.

Higher level of participation means emotion of owning the work and its good result, sensibility to preserve the result, readiness to solve problems arising out of action (because every development creates the problem of affluence or scope of utilizing new means so far not used), and extending own mental universe with ethos of accommodation and the spirit of togetherness. Until villagers are choosers of their programs for fulfillment of their 'being and becoming' goals, there cannot be higher level of participation. In higher level of participation quality of involvement increases, contribution becomes meaningful, reconnaissance of space-situation-resource approaches perfection, and trans-generational empirical experiences get shared for action. Such a group of people naturally do wonders in

developing their habitat and community life. One such wonder is cost-effectiveness of development program which so far has eluded us.

One such method has recently been reported by Loha Choudhury (2003, 2009, 2011).<sup>59</sup> Information gap Elimination Meet Series (IGEMS) is the complete process of turn-around from understanding own problem, identifying resources and project team formation to executing development action by the community. In this process, information gain is achieved in the chain of events through group edit. People realize that they can transform hitherto latent facts from within the community into potent force for action. In doing so, gap of facts is gradually eliminated developing a full blown picture of the situation. This decreasing information gap through the series of meets helps members with better envisioning of action points. The success of action initiative is then programmed to go down the memory lane utilizing folk communication.

Such methods would utilize latent information of the community about themselves and ecosystem intelligently, initiate a new regime of development accounting eliminating projects with big money much of which goes waste, bring down dependency on outside but connect to outside as equals, and ensure preservation of development result over generations.

As a consequence, the esteem of communities would be restored. Is not the living with dignity ultimate goal of every human being?



## Chapter VI

### What then is the Paradigm

Greek *paradeigma* means example. T.S. Kuhn used the word paradigm in this sense to beliefs, values and techniques shared by the members of a given scientific community, the “disciplinary matrix”.<sup>60</sup>

Bartoli wrote later (1999), “The ‘new paradigm’ pursued by international experts is not exclusive to the scientific community. It calls on all actors in economic, social, political and cultural life; it requires us to rise to the challenges of our times. What is needed is not so much an ‘example’ as a ‘portrayal of development’ centred on a guiding principle; not so much a ‘disciplinary’ as a ‘pluri-dimensional’ matrix in which all facets of development find expression.”<sup>61</sup>

In this sense ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress as the vision of community, country and governance becomes meaningful. As it requires a shift from obsession with money, ‘Man Standard’ in economic initiatives for development as a long term goal, and increasing individual capacity to earn by serving the people in all avatars (consumer, judge or client, relation) as the immediate but continuous goal should be implemented. Nature is the big existence in which we are part should be the refrain deciding the

strategy for all development initiatives with the pledge to keep the ecosystem balance intact. The time has come when communication should again be restated as the consciousness of humanity and the priceless gift of nature which awaits utilization for unfurling human potential towards evolving into a better human civilization. For the first time, the Information as Man's contribution to the development and preservation of world into a better living habitat in every conceivable area of human action is demonstrated. Its systemic presence in action system for development may take us further correcting much of the damage we have done over last five hundred years.

Last but not the least important is the consideration that now the ambition is trans-generational progress of every civilization so that the continuity of human existence along with its mental culture never breaks due to shocks, tremors and aggrandizement perpetrated by human being anywhere. Thus the human being comes to the centre for fulfilling his/her duty of acknowledging to the nature and transcending strength of heritage with reason of its existence to future generations.

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## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Rethinking Development: Putting An End to Poverty, Professor Bartoli's book written on the basis of review and developing salient points of the UNESCO discussion "Rethinking Development: do we need a paradigm shift" in its headquarters in Paris held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1998 as International day of Reflection on the topic. On invitation, Bartoli worked upon the discussion there. Chapter I, page 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ethnique et economie, et autres essays*, Paris, PUF, 1993, Page 218

<sup>3</sup> Foreword to Rethinking Development: Putting an End to Poverty, viii

<sup>4</sup> Jatin Mohanty, *Economic Thoughts of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra*, memoir of national Seminar on *Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's Educational and Economic Thoughts*, Assam University Silchar, March 2002

<sup>5</sup> Kar Ajit quotes in *SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandrers Bhabdharae Satsang*, in *Ma Mriyaswa Ma Jahee, The Centenary Celebration Volume, 1987, Page70*

<sup>6</sup> SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra, *Anusruti* part I (English translation), Chapter: Character, Verse 40

<sup>7</sup> Mentioned in the chapter VII *Tradition: Truth or Travesty*, Page 57 of the book *Answer to The Quest* by Ray Hauserman. The book was first published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bhavan's Book University series in 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page57

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<sup>9</sup> Dog's Tail Syndrome is the term coined by the author in 1998 to express the qualitative state of Indian peoples' development vis-a-vis development efforts of the country.

<sup>10</sup> Amitava Kundu, *Humanising Economics*, H.B. Narayan (ed.) *SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra Centenary Volume*, 1987, page 62

<sup>11</sup> Biplab Loha Choudhury, *Sustainable Rural Development: An Indian Experiment Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge System and Communication* in D. Dasgupta (Ed) *Indigenous Knowledge System & Common People's right*, Agrobios (India), 2009 Page 168

<sup>12</sup> Nityanand Pandey, *Introducing The Seminar: Searching Alternatives from Within*, P.5, B. L. Choudhury (ed.) *Memoir National Seminar on SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra's Educational and Economic Thoughts*, Assam University Silchar, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> In this regard *Economics for the Common Good* by Mark A. Lutz offers a thorough discussion. This was published by Routledge, London in 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Aryans*, page 86

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Page 39

<sup>17</sup> Sinha H.N., *The development of Indian Polity*, P. 103

<sup>18</sup> Ray. A. Hauserman described the movement of human development by Sreesree Thakur Anukulchandra in the book

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*Ocean in A Teacup: The Story of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra*. It was published in 1962 by Harper & Brothers, U.S.A. In Part two of the book from pages 99 to 102, the writer wrote about the movement.

<sup>19</sup> Mentioned in the introduction p. xv of the book *Answer to The Quest* by Ray Hauserman. The book was published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Book University series in 1964

<sup>20</sup> Amitava Kundu, *Humanising Economics*, P.63, H.B. Narayan (ed.) *SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra Centenary Volume*, 1987

<sup>21</sup> SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra is often called Thakur in Indian sub continent.

<sup>22</sup> Henri Bartoli, *Rethinking Development: Putting an End to Poverty*, 1999, page 164

<sup>23</sup> SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra, *The Message*, economics section, First Edition, Satsang Publishing House, 1965

<sup>24</sup> SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra, *The Message*, Volume VIII, Page 208, 1965. This was SreeSree's advice to his disciples since 1917.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Page 7

<sup>26</sup> SreeSree Thakur, *Magnadicta*, Verse 46, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005, Satsang Publishing House, Deoghar

<sup>27</sup> Amitava Kundu, *Humanising Economics*, P. 62-63, H.B. Narayan (ed.) *SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra Centenary Volume*, 1987

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<sup>28</sup> Radha Krishna Lal, *The Social Philosophy of SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra*, Deojyoti Publications, Deoghar, 2004, P.186.

<sup>29</sup> Henri Bartoli, "Progrès et pauvreté: les concepts et leur dialectique dans les civilisations et leur cultures", in *Poverty, Progress And Development*, London, UNESCO and Kegan Paul International, 1961

<sup>30</sup> Bela Banerjee, *Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra and the need of the Nation*, Souvenir of national seminar on Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's Educational and Economic Perspectives, Assam University Silchar, 2002, Page 6

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Henri Bartoli's *Rethinking Development Putting an End to Poverty* page 165 from 1959 publication *Theorie economique et pays non-developpés*, Paris, Presence africaine, Page 118

<sup>32</sup> Mentioned in the chapter VII *Tradition: Truth or Travesty* p.57 of the book *Answer to The Quest* by Ray Hauserman. The book was published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bhavan's Book University series in 1964

<sup>33</sup> SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra, *Magnadicta*, Verse 105, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2004

<sup>34</sup> The segment following the question is taken from Biplab Loha Choudhury's paper *Sustainable Rural Development: An Indian Experiment Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge System and Communication* presented in *IKS and Common people's Rights session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, at Kunming City, China, July 2009

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<sup>35</sup> This was utilized by Biplab Loha Choudhury as a part of communication strategy for success in *developing Communities from within* during Assam University Rural Communication project action phase 1998-2001.

<sup>36</sup> These two axioms were created as guiding post during Assam University Rural Communication Project action phase from 1998 to 2001 in three adjoining villages at three levels of development (most-underdeveloped to moderately developed) as a cluster for development. They had common IKS, single health centre, same block development office and single high school.

<sup>37</sup> Amitava Kundu, *Humanising Economics*, P.63, H.B. Narayan (ed.) *SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra Centenary Volume*, 1987.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Bartoli, *Rethinking Development putting an End to Poverty*, Page 162

<sup>39</sup> Translated by Biplab Loha Choudhury from Alochana Prasangae (Ben), Fifth Volume, 1945

<sup>40</sup> World Bank Report on development infrastructure 1994

<sup>41</sup> SreeSree Thakur, *Magnadicta*, Verse 46, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005, Satsang Publishing House, Deoghar

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, Verse 239

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, Verse 104

<sup>44</sup> Prigogine, I Stengers: *La Nouvelle Alliance, Metaphore De La Science*, Paris, Gallimard, 1979

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<sup>45</sup> Ben Whelan, a member of the Feasta Committee observed this while reviewing Lutz's Book *economics for the common good*.

<sup>46</sup> Mark A. Lutz, *Economics for the Common Good*, Routledge, London, 1998.

<sup>47</sup> Biplab Loha Choudhury presented the concept of Information as the sixth element in his paper *People's Development: Five Elements as metaphor* in Visva-Bharati international seminar *Discourses on "Five Elements" concept in a philosophical and historical perspective held in March, 2010. The segment on sixth element is based on the paper.*

<sup>48</sup> For detailed understanding, *Vedas & Computers* by RVSS Avadhanulu is an excellent study. It also shows the possibility where computer's communication programs can improve utilizing observations from *Mimamsa*. This was published by Shri Veda Bharati, Hyderabad, India in 1999

<sup>49</sup> J.F. Lyotard, *The Post modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester University Press, 1984, Page5

<sup>50</sup> M. Castells, *The Rise of Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. I, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, Page 17

<sup>51</sup> Porat offered this definition in the classic text of Information Economics, *The Information Economy: Definition and Measurement*, as a commissioned work of US department of Commerce in 1977



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<sup>52</sup> First footnote to Castell's book *The Rise of Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. I, page 21

<sup>53</sup> Biplab Loha Choudhury, *Sustainable Rural Development: An Indian Experiment Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge System and Communication*, D. Dasgupta (Ed) *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Common People's Rights*, Agrobios India, Jaipur, page 167

<sup>54</sup> Wilbur Schramm, *Communication and Development: Revaluation*, Communicator, April, 1977

<sup>55</sup> Srinivas R Melkote, H Leslie Steeves, (2004) *Communication for Development in the Third World*: 2nd edition 2004, New Delhi, Sage, PP 36, 37

<sup>56</sup> Biplab Loha Choudhury, *Sustainable Rural Development: An Indian Experiment Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge System and Communication*, D. Dasgupta (Ed) *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Common People's Rights*, Agrobios India, Jaipur, page 170.

These values were hypothesized by the author from his experience of six years (1990-1996) as a government development executive working in West Bengal and observing development program implementation in few other states of India too. Whether the values identified were real or notional was tested in a study on Communication as *raison-d-etre* for Rural Development during 1997-98 in Biara block of Cachar district in Assam. The study identified the values to be present in successful communication for rural development. Assam University Rural Communication Project

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(1998-2001) utilized these values in its communication strategy for development.

<sup>57</sup> Henri Bartoli, *Rethinking Development Putting an End to Poverty*, Pages 12-13

<sup>58</sup> Human Development Report, 1995, Page 12

<sup>59</sup> Reported by Biplab Loha Choudhury, the Principal Action Worker and Investigator of Assam University Rural Communication Project in Impact Sustainability Study of Agriculture in Nayabil, AURCP, 2003, to the technical session on Indigenous Knowledge System and Common People's Right in IUAES 2009 and to the Journal of Social Work & Social Development, December 2010.

<sup>60</sup> M. Blaug, *"Kuhn versus Lakatos, or Paradigm versus Research programs in the History of Economics"*, History of Political Economy, Winter, 1975

<sup>61</sup> Henri Bartoli, *Rethinking Development Putting An End To Poverty*, page 9

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He is also the founder-trustee and think-tank, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore Foundation (GRTF), New Delhi. Recently, he has been elected the Country Director for India (2014-2016) of the Asian Congress for Media & Communication (ACMC). He may be contacted at [blcpal@gmail.com](mailto:blcpal@gmail.com).

### **Some Other Books By The Same Author:**

- Media and Communication: Practices and Issues (Jointly Edited), SB Enterprise (2014)
- Nabamadhyamer Rooprekha (Bengali) (An Outline of New Media), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parishad (West Bengal State Book Board), Kolkata (2013)
- Media Organization Management, Unique Books International, Kolkata (2008)

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## **INDIAN PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT, MAN STANDARD AND COMMUNICATION**

By

Prof. Madan Chandra Paul School of Social Science, Jawaharlal

Nehru University, New Delhi

Indian Paradigms of Development, Man Standard and Communication

By Biplab Loho Choudhury, Pages 95, Price Rs. 150/-, Sampark, 2011

The debate on nature of development is gradually encompassing the entire world, not only the less developed or under-developed countries. The truth of only three less developed countries (LDCs) being brought to developed category over last few decades despite huge international development funding in almost all LDCs world-wide in the same period shows how the neo-liberal economic approach and the slogan of sustainable development fared badly. On the other side, the crisis of climate change, decreasing performance of developed economic powers, increasing disparity among people in the world, and elusiveness of peace within country and among countries as a precondition of development are raising questions of efficiency of the system followed.

At this juncture, attempts to reshape approaches in economic and other human activities with the goal of averting the crisis facing humanity and nature are looked with much interest. Loho Choudhury's book is going to evoke much interest in this regard. This small book has made a brief critique of dominant economic ideologies followed so far and introduced economic thoughts and practices of Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra ( who has mostly been

known as a spiritual man for last hundred years) .It brought the logic of shifting development from following money-centric approach to man-centric approach drawing on the logic of interconnectedness and inter-interestedness of human beings and the role of individual economic practices in development as stressed by Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra. It presented the state's role in ordering such a shift. Here, the author envisaged the paradigm of ecologically-sustainable trans-generational progress and strongly argued in favor of a shift from sustainable development to ecologically- sustainable trans-generational progress as the way of furtherance of human civilization.

In the penultimate chapter " Information, The Sixth Element, and Communication, The Most Under-utilized", Loho Choudhury begins by observing that information , due to new media development has got transformed into the sixth element. Till now human beings have exploited five elements of nature namely land, air, water, space and energy in search of civilizational growth. Such exploitation, being excessive, is threatening the existence of life on the Earth. The need is to create such norms and practices of agriculture, industry and service that

would bring down the level of exploitation of five elements beneath the critical limit. Information, as a positive resource generating from human-computer-nature interfacing can be utilized to make processes of production and service ecologically compatible. Information as integrative and rationalizing resource is able to help decreasing wastage of resource, cost of human labour and availing best cost-efficient resource mobilization, cost-optimising action and ethical practices. Till now it is being utilized mostly to bring more surplus to capitalists, thereby its potential for effecting nature-human concordance of development remaining unutilized. Loho Choudhury calls for integration of this new media development with indigenous knowledge system of communities in achieving the aim of information closure on issues of development. These two together complete the *raison-de-etre* of existence and continuation of communication as a process and series of events through ages within the boundaries of gradually expanding human communities. Loho Choudhury proposes that development, to be really people's own, should be facilitated through their own communication instruments, without ignoring the tradition of communication of communities. He observes that mass media based communication strategy and action lacks several values which are crucial for success in development. Success in development demands the convergence between perspectives of development and the communication method pursued.

Loho Choudhury argues that the money-obsession in economics and development planning is destructive. It creates belief in all that without money nothing is possible. He presents thoughts of Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra in this context. In chapter III "Man Standard: Quest for Humanising Economics" begins by repeating the old question- how far individual rationality promotes overall social welfare ?

How to solve the mismatch between individual and collective rationality, and the disastrous impact of

non-economic decisions by many on growth of the society are two good reasons he looks into Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra's ideas. Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra found the dichotomy between individual and collective rationality, and between economic and non-economic interests untenable. He said that every human being must fashion work for own being and becoming and sublimate own desires and aspirations in the service of society. Loho Choudhury quotes noted economist Amitava Kundu, "once this occurs, self-interest cannot be seen as divorced from community interest. And if the individuals act within this framework, using the 'Man Standard' as opposed to the 'Money Standard', the apparent contradictions created by the decisions based on fragmented self-interests and short-term private gains would tend to disappear. The combination of economic and non-economic welfare provides the base for an integrated philosophy of life, which must coordinate the thought, speech and action of a person. This would make possible harmonization of discrepancies between personal goals and collective goals, and create a social structure permitting enlightened self fulfillment and promoting, at the same time, growth and stability in the economy." Loho Choudhury records several principles of 'Man standard' practices in the chapter.

This book puts forward the paradigm of 'ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress' (ESTGP) as an advancement of the paradigm of 'sustainable development' shifting the aim of stability and growth from development at any given time and from one condition to better (which is decided from debatable frames of reference and ideal types) to that of continuity with urge of natural being and becoming of individuals and societies. Loho Choudhury writes, "In this sense ESTGP as the vision of community, country and governance becomes meaningful. As it requires a shift from obsession with money, 'Man Standard' in economic initiatives for development as long term

goal, and increasing individual capacity to earn by serving the people in all avatars (consumer, jagdman or client, relation) as the immediate and continuous goal should be implemented.” He envisages that creative, participatory, cost-efficient and common man’s pride redeeming communication would play great role in this journey. He stresses, “ now the ambition is trans-generational progress of every civilization so that the continuity of human existence along with its mental culture never breaks due to shocks, tremors and aggrandizement by human being anywhere.”

This small book presents three distinct ideas of relevance. First, ‘man Standard’ in economics and development; second, information as the sixth element in development; and last the paradigm of ESTGP – all of which need to be critically looked into in serach of alternatives in economics, development and development communication. The book has some errors in printing.

Indian Paradigms of Development, Man Standard and Communication looks at alternative ideas in development. In particular, the author looks at the ideas of Indian thinker SreeSree Thakur Anukulchandra.

The book delves into the ideas and ideals of ecological development and introduces the important idea of trans-generational progress. Through a comparative understanding of various schools of development in economics and politics, the author puts forth notes towards an Indian paradigm of development.

Dr. Biplab LohoChoudhury is Professor in the Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal. He has been working actively in media studies, media organization management and alternative development for the last three decades.



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